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SUBJECT: NOVEMBER 30 MFA PRESS BRIEFING: SIX-PARTY TALKS, US-CHINA STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIALOGUE, NYT REPORTER ZHAO YAN, IRAQ, DEPUTY FM ZHAI JUN VISIT TO ISRAEL-PALESTINE, CATHOLIC BISHOPS, CHRISTIAN SECT CAPITAL PUNISHMENT, CHINA-JAPAN MILITARY EXCHANGES, WEN AND FM LI TO ATTEND ASEAN

¶1. Key Points at the November 30 MFA Press Conference were:

-- Meetings between the heads of the Six-Party Talks delegations from China, the United States and the DPRK were helpful. No date for the talks has been set.

-- The United States-China Strategic Economic Dialogue co-chaired by Treasury Secretary Paulson and VPM Wu Yi will be held in Beijing December 14-15.

-- New York Times reporter Zhao Yan is being tried in accordance with Chinese law. A verdict on his re-trial is expected tomorrow.

-- Chinese Deputy FM Zhai Jun will visit the Israel-Palestine region to exchange views and promote the peace process.

-- Appointing Bishops is an internal affair of China. The Vatican should consider its historical relationship with China and sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

-- The execution of members of a Christian sect in Northeast China is a judicial matter, not related to religion.

-- Premier Wen and FM Li Zhaoxing will attend ASEAN 1, ASEAN 3 and East Asia Summit meetings in the Philippines.

-- FM Li meets with new WHO Director General Margaret Chan and guests from over 30 WHO countries.

MFA Offers No New Information on Six-Party Talks

¶2. Asked repeatedly what new developments came out of informal talks this week between EAP A/S Christopher Hill, Vice Foreign Minister Wu Dawei and DPRK Vice Foreign Minister Kim Gye-gwan, MFA Spokesperson Jiang Yu said that bilateral and trilateral talks between the three delegations were helpful. She reiterated China's hopes that all parties can take full use of this opportunity and take a flexible and constructive attitude for an in-depth exchange of ideas so as to create conditions for the early re-launching and success of the Six-Party Talks. Jiang had no information on a meeting today between VFM Wu and VFM Kim, when asked for comment by a Fuji TV (Japan) reporter.

First US-China Strategic Economic Dialogue to be Held

13. Jiang announced that the United States-China Strategic Economic Dialogue co-chaired by Treasury Secretary Paulson and VPM Wu Yi will be held in

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Beijing December 14-15. President Hu and Premier Wen will meet the U.S. delegation respectively. The dialogue will focus on economic and trade cooperation and the stability of the global economy.

NYT Reporter Zhao Yan Tried by Rule of Law

14. In response to a question regarding tomorrow's verdict in the second trial of New York Times reporter Zhao Yan and the implications for freedom of press in China, Jiang said the case has been "tried in accordance with Chinese law."

View on Iraq Study Group Consensus

15. When asked about China's opinion on the consensus reached by the Iraq Study Group, Jiang replied that China advocates a withdrawal of foreign troops from Iraq in accordance with UNSC resolutions, stabilization of the region and Iraqi self-governance. She said further diplomatic engagement with neighboring countries would be conducive to peace and stability in the region.

Deputy FM Zhai Jun to Visit Israel and Palestine

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16. When asked to comment on recent peace overtures between Israel and Palestine, Jiang replied that China appreciates measures taken by both sides to ease tensions and hopes that both parties will take concrete steps to quickly resume peace talks. She noted that as a UNSC member, China is devoted to solving the Middle East issue and will send Deputy FM Zhai Jun to visit relevant countries to exchange views and promote resumption of the peace process.

Appointing Bishops is an Internal Affair of China

17. In reply to a reporter's comment that the recent appointment of a new Catholic Bishop in China without Vatican approval would anger the Vatican, Jiang said China hopes the Vatican would consider the two parties' historical relationship and current status of the Chinese Catholic Church to elect its own Bishops. She repeated China's position that the Vatican must sever diplomatic relations with Taiwan and not interfere in the internal affairs of China, even under the pretext of religion. China hopes to explore improving relations with the Vatican based on these principles.

Executing Christian Sect Members is a Judicial Matter

18. Responding to recent reports of sentencing to death members of a Christian sect for crimes in Heilongjiang province, Jiang said that this is a judicial matter

being handled by relevant judicial departments in accordance with Chinese law and is not related to religion.

China, Japan to Enhance Military Exchange

¶ 9. Chinese People's Liberation Army Assistant to the Chief of General Staff Zhang Qinsheng had consultations with Japanese Defense Agency Vice Minister Takemasa Moriya on Wednesday afternoon during the 7th Sino-Japan defense and security talks, said Jiang. The two parties decided to enhance exchanges and arrange for high level military visits. The meeting marks the turning of a new page in the two nations' ties and will play a positive role in promoting the bilateral relationship, added Jiang.

Premier Wen, FM Li to Attend December Meetings in Philippines

¶ 10. Premier Wen will attend the Tenth ASEAN 1 Summit, Tenth ASEAN 3 Summit and Second East Asia Summit during a visit to the Philippines December 11-14. In addition, he will chair the Seventh China-Japan-ROK Summit and pay a formal state visit to the Philippines at the invitation of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. Immediately preceding Premier Wen's visit from December 9-10, Chinese Foreign Minister Li will attend the ASEAN 1 Foreign Ministers Meeting, attend the Foreign Ministers Working Luncheons of ASEAN 3 and East Asian Summit and chair the Fourth China-Japan-ROK Tri-party Committee Meeting at the invitation of Philippines Foreign Minister Alberto Romulo, Jiang said.

FM Li Meets with New WHO Chief Margaret Chan

¶ 11. Newly Elected Director General of the WHO Margaret Chan visited China November 27-30 to exchange ideas with relevant departments of the Chinese government, Jiang said. On November 29 FM Li held a reception for Chan that included guests from over 30 member countries of the Executive Board of the WHO and representatives from various United Nations institutions in China.

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